(d) Does not arise in view of (b) and (c) above.

Procurement of paddy in Madhya Pradesh

†3604. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI : Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Agencies are running in losses in procurement of paddy in Madhya Pradesh;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is also a fact that different criteria are being adopted by the Central Government for Madhya Pradesh; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. Foodgrains procured by the State Governments and their agencies are ultimately taken over by the FCI. For the services rendered and expenses incurred by the State Governments and their agencies, FCI reimburses all the incidental expenses such as statutory charges, storage charges, milling charge in the case of paddy, interest, cost of mandi labour, cost of gunny, administrative charges, statutory taxes/cess etc.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Prices of edible oils

3605. SHRI LALIT SURI : Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the prices of edible oils, particularly those of low fat category like Safola etc. have been rising;

(b) if so, the percentage of rise in prices for the last two years, category-wise; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by Government to ensure availability of edible oils of all the categories, particularly of low fat categories, for which demand has been on the increase on medical grounds for the elderly?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD) : (a) and (b) There is no such categorization as "low fat" oils. The retail prices of groundnut oil and mustard oil are monitored regularly. The percentage of rise in retail prices of groundnut oil and mustard oil for the last two years has been 63.2 and 51.3 respectively.

(c) The steps taken/proposed to be taken to ensure availability of edible oils include :–

(i) Import of edible oils has been allowed on OGL,

(ii) The import duty structure of edible oils is reviewed from time to time and availability of edible oils including their prices is regularly monitored,

(iii) An aggregate Tariff Rate Quota (TRQ) of the total imports for crude sunflower or safflower oil and refined rape, colza or mustard oil is permitted at a concessional rate of duty, for actual users,

(iv) The State Government/UT Administrations have been addressed to maintain constant watch over the availability and prices of edible oils and to take timely appropriate measures so as to prevent any possibility of dislocation in the supply of safe edible oils.

Falling stock of foodgrains

3606. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH : Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that food stocks have fallen considerably during the current financial year;

(b) if so, the details of the food stocks during the last two years; and

(c) what steps are proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA) : (a) and (b) The stock of foodgrains in the Central Pool is more than buffer norms. It was 457.68 lakh tonnes as on 1.1.2001, 581.12 lakh tonnes as on 1.1.2002 and 482.05 lakh tonnes as on 1.1.2003.